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Editor—Estelle Herf

May 1955

CONTENTS

	Page
London Reviews	4
Paris News	5
Violetta Elvin Column ..	6
American Scene	7
Aisle Seat	8
Chrysantheme	10
Margot Fonteyn Story ..	12
Danish Festival 1955 ..	14
Musician at the Ballet ..	15
Digest History of Ballet ..	16
Imaginary Conversation ..	17
Approach to Ballet	18
Books and Discs	20
Diary..	21
Class Wear	22

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COVER PORTRAIT

Elaine Fifield in Variations on a Theme of Purcell. *Exclusive Ballet Today photograph by Mike Davis.*

Antonio. *A new photograph by Mike Davis.*

Madame Chrysanthème

FREDERICK Ashton is master of many styles, approaching each new work with a zest for experiment which over twenty-five years as a choreographer have left undimmed. After the elaborate neo-classicism of *Variations on a Theme of Purcell* and the muted romanticism of *Rinaldo and Armida*, he has now completed a fascinating trilogy with *Madame Chrysanthème* which was given its first performance at Covent Garden on April 1st.

Probably encouraged by the solo, *Entry of Madame Butterfly*, which he composed for Margot Fonteyn at the Grenada Festival last year, Ashton has again turned to the East for his inspiration, although it is here filtered through the rather wan romanticism of Pierre Loti's book upon which the ballet is based.

The story of a little Japanese girl whose temporary marriage to a visiting French sailor is arranged and concluded with ceremonious refinement, a little heartache and a lot of gold sovereigns, is told in five short scenes. The highly dramatic opening moments established by a solo singer and one of Covent Garden's finest stage storms, give a false impression, since the remainder of the ballet is as elegant, slight and sentimental as a story painted on a fan.

Ashton has borrowed little from the traditional techniques of Japanese Ballet, being content to decorate his own subtle and evocative style with unusual poses and hand gestures. Only the traditional Sword Dance in the fourth scene appears to be authentic; elsewhere Ashton has modified his own classical style to suit his subject. Thus the dancers' movements, being severely limited by their costumes, have been designed on a small scale with the attention focused on the elaborate and intricate patterns made by their feet. In the fourth scene—that of Madame Chrysanthème's wedding festival—the dancers appear in modified classical *tutus*, giving Ashton the opportunity for devising his most sustained dance passages.

Here a solo for Elaine Fifield as Madame Chrysanthème, in which she marks the rhythm with her two fluttering fans, may well have been based on the solo Ashton created for Fonteyn but which has not been seen in this country; certainly from photographs several movements seem identical. In the exquisite *pas de deux* that follows Ashton has once again used the small floating *lifts* which have become so much a feature of his choreography, but here their beauty is enhanced by the manner in which the dancer's feet beat and flutter together as she is carried across the stage.

The choreography for the rest of the ballet is on a less high level. Ashton has never been so successful in narrative works and the passages of conventional mime fall very flat. Using a much smaller vocabulary of movement than usual, he does not altogether escape the dangers of monotony; and one's fascination with his stylized poses and movements cannot be maintained, as they are limited in scope and frequently repeated. The ballet is, in fact, charming and unimportant—a piece of Japanese fancywork, like one of those curios that are sold to tourists and are more likely to come from Birmingham than Tokyo. Its beauties—especially in the fourth scene—are incidental; the total effect is one of mild disappointment.

Elaine Fifield scored her greatest success to date at Covent Garden with her interpretation of the title role. Whimsical, demure and enigmatic, her Madame Chrysanthème is an enchanting creation. She has a wonderful sense of style, and the carriage of her head and the way she uses her eyes are the hall-mark of a genuine artist. She was admirably supported by Alexandre Grant, who danced and acted with his usual conviction and brilliant timing. In a minor role Ray Powell as the oily and furtive Mr. Kangarou—a marriage broker, in polite terms—was excellent, and its authenticity can easily be confirmed in the Place Pigalle for those interested.

Isobel Lambert's back-drop caught something of the airy grace of Chinese landscape painting, while her scene changes were neatly contrived by the use of small screens which the dancers manipulated themselves. On first hearing Alan Rawsthorne's music appeared somewhat monotonous and too-heavily scored for so fragile a story; future hearing may reveal beauties at present unrevealed.

R.A.

Symphonic Variations Revival

IF there is any single performance in any one owrk which clearly demonstrates the contribution of English Ballet to the classical style, it must surely be that of Margot Fonteyn in *Symphonic Variations*. The beauty of Ashton's masterpiece has, if anything, increased since it was first performed nine years ago; its lyricism, simplicity and depth of feeling have made it the supreme work of its type in modern ballet. There is no virtuosity, none of the sterile eurhythmics we have come to expect from such works; instead Ashton has used his six dancers in a meditation upon Franck's music—drifting and gliding, floating on tiny lifts, they sustain the mood throughout.

FONTEYN'S PERFECTION

In the revival on March 19, Margot Fonteyn danced with a total absorption in the music, a rapt serenity and an effortless flow of movement which is the perfection of the English style. Her performance in *Symphonic Variations* will long be remembered and clearly shows why she, alone of contemporary ballerinas, can justly be described as a genius. She was admirably supported by Pauline Clayden and Rosemary Lindsay.

BERIOSOVA GAINS STRENGTH

On the same evening a finely-balanced programme also included Cranko's *The Shadow*, which does not seem to be lasting very well. I find Piper's decor and costumes unimaginative, and the brown wigs appalling; while Cranko's choreography is a little thin in places where a long score has had to be padded. However the *pas de deux* for Beriosova and Chatfield, if at times over acrobatic, contains some beautiful movements. Beriosova has gained in strength and precision since she first created the role, which in itself perfectly suits her remote grace.

"PURCELL" IMPROVES

Ashton's new ballet *Variations on a Theme of Purcell* reveals new qualities which were at first obscured by the disastrous sets and costumes. It is an extremely musical work; the three opening soli are a fine example of his later, more complex style. Here the problem of creating a visual equivalent to musical variations is most ingeniously solved, and I believe in this respect Ashton has been more successful than Balanchine who attempted the same thing in *Caracole*.

FIFIELD'S POLKA

It is easy to be superior about *Facade*, but many people in the audience are seeing it for the first time; it is to them, and not to the jaded balletomane who is bored to death by it, that the ballet is directed. Elaine Fifield's mock solemnity in the Polka was excellent, and Merle Park is every man's ideal of what a milkmaid should be.

R.A.

Ballabile

BALLABILE epitomises every thing that is French, and everything that is alien to the style of English dancers; yet it achieves the result of being one of the most refreshing ballets in the present repertoire. The work is slender in its construction, yet it manages to create a captivating air of enchantment with its abundance of youthful characteristics.

The riverside scene, with an exotic Violetta Elvin playing the role she created, was a delight to watch with its melancholy lazy setting of shadowy trees. The 'street in the rain' scene was neatly executed, with Joan Benesh and Alexander Grant pert and amusing. From the street to the circus ring, where Angela Walton as the equestrienne provided a delightful cameo in the role created by Margaret Dale. The ballet is brought to a close with a Spanish scene, which is again dominated by Violetta Elvin and Philip Chatfield.

The skilful use of colour in the settings of Antoni Clavé is one of the principal attractions of the ballet, in which many effects are gained by the use of ingenious lighting.

The arrangement of Chabrier's music by Constant Lambert was remarkably well played by the orchestra under Robert Irving.

V.C.

LONDON REVIEWS
(contd.)

Ballet Workshop

BALLET Workshop resumed its quest for new talent on March 13 when a programme comprising works by three choreographers was presented at the Mercury Theatre.

Neither of the two new ballets can be described as successful. *Fanciulla dei Coralli* with choreography by Donato Fortes tells the not unfamiliar story of a young man ensnared by an enchantress of the sea—this one is a coral reef lady—and must regretfully be classed as an almost total failure. A ballet of this kind, as Lifar's *Nauteos* and Rodrigues' *Ile des Sirenes* demonstrated, requires highly expressive and poetic choreography; here the banal classroom *enchainements* were drearily inadequate. They were matched by the decor and costumes.

Peter Darrell's *Balleto da Camera* to Vivaldi's music contained several well arranged *pas de deux*, and was excellently performed; Noel Rossana, in particular, danced with an enchanting spontaneity, precision and charm. An abstract ballet of this nature, however, requires much more flexibility and imagination in its treatment of the music than was here obtained. The settings by Jack Coutu seemed drab in colour and too heavy in design for the gracious elegance of Vivaldi's score.

The third ballet, *Palisades*, by Michael Holmes remains one of the finest works to be presented by Ballet Workshop. This study of the horrors of imprisonment is tragecally contemporary in feeling; all the robot-like impersonality of modern tyranny is contained in it. Michael Hobson's music superbly catches the atmosphere of mounting panic, and Ton Lingwood's brilliant impressionistic sets contribute to a work which deserves a wider showing. The leading role was well danced by Michel de Lutry and the casual, detached evil of the modern inquisitor was presented by Arthur Solomon with horrifying reality.

R.A.

FERDINAND REYNA FROM PARIS

ONE might say that Paris has this season made a choreographic tour of East Europe. After the Poles, the Yugoslavs, the Hungarians, the Rumanians, came the Greeks and Bulgarians.

GREEK BALLET

The National Greek Ballet, founded in Athens in 1952, by Madame Dora Stratou, comprises 22 dancers and singers and 7 musicians. The director does much research into the songs, dances and costumes of the Greek provinces, and adapts them for the stage without altering the substance of them. Most of the poses shown may be found on antique vases. They were accompanied by traditional folklore instruments, including the little-known pipiza.

Despite the good will of the organisers the programme quickly became monotonous. The circles, the entrances of young girls in single file holding hands, were repeated in each item and were too reminiscent of other Balkan dances, which after all, come from the same source. Bulgaria for example corresponds with the Thrace of ancient Greece.

A performance presented on the stage of a large theatre such as the Champs-Elysées has great demands made upon it. The Greek ballet did not have great success in Paris.

BULGARIAN COMPANY

The Bulgarian ballet, the official company of the Bulgarian republic, appeared at the Chaillot theatre from March 16th to April 6th. The company was founded by Philippe Koutev and their choreographer is Madame Marguerite Dekova. Created in 1951, the group comprises 115 artists, dancers, singers and musicians. The dances reflect the character of the principal regions of Bulgaria with their village fetes, ritual dances, work dances, etc. The programme was extremely well presented, with excellent costumes and songs. The little choreographic sketches, cleverly composed and varied, made the dances themselves more interesting, whereas in the case of the Greek company the audience could see very little difference between the dances. In fact, the regular theatre public is not made up of specialists in folklore; and yet the Bulgarian company, with the abounding vitality of its men, the natural grace of its girls, the precision of the ensemble, obtained a great success in Paris.

ANOTHER ROMEO AND JULIET

Maurice Lehmann, director of the Opera, will present Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* with choreography by Serge Lifar during the present season. A major ballet to a Bela Bartok concerto will also be produced, with choreography by Harald Lander.

SPANISH SEASON

A season of Spanish classical, modern and folk dances will open at the Theatre de l'Etoile at the end of May. Juanito Valderrama will present his company, and notably the female dancer Fernanda Romero.

MANOLITA AND TWO FACES OF SPAIN

THE Ba-Ta-Clan Cinema was not designed for recitals, especially not for Spanish Dance recitals. Its narrow stage —cemented and rebellious against heel-tapping—its poor lighting and its rather peculiar acoustics were all hindrances to the performance of Manolita and Rafael Aguilar.

INTENSE PASSION

Manolita is Spanish—but of the Spain of Goya rather than that of Velasquez. Her face is like one of those un-gentle virgins of the 'pasos' of Holy Week at Granada—a Virgin of Berguette. The intense passion which marks her features is ideally suited to fiery dances like those which ended the first part of her recital (Soleares and Seguiriyas)—but she was less convincing in the dazzling virtuosity of "Sonata' and in her 'Jota', an unlooked-for incursion into the world of Velasquez.

YOUTHFUL SKILL

Rafael Aguilar—a former classic dancer who was a pupil of Barbara Vernon and John Gregory in London, held a scholarship at the Sadler's Wells School. His training as a Spanish dancer is due to Manolita, and his youthful skill does honour to his teachers. He was remarkable in the Bolero, and was also able to triumph over the difficulties of the Zapateados.

So, in spite of all their difficulties these two greatly talented artists gave us one of our better evenings at their recital.

Jean Coquelle

A Day in the Life of a Ballerina

Violetta Elvin

writes her usual monthly column

A dancer's life is a busy life. I think that anyone amongst whose acquaintances there is a ballet dancer will bear me out on this.

Compared with the other theatrical professions our day begins quite early. The performance on the night before may have been over just after ten o'clock. And after greeting visitors, removing make-up, changing and tidying about the dressing room, one may, with luck, be out of the theatre an hour later. Supper at home—most dancers don't eat a full meal before performances—some ribbons to sew on our ballet shoes for tomorrow's rehearsal, some personal things to attend to and a thought to the planning of the following day and it is well past midnight before we finally manage to go to sleep. And usually, up by half past eight for class at ten o'clock !

Our daily class takes an hour. It is absolutely essential to keep oneself in condition. Rehearsals last a further hour or two. Probably a private lesson twice or three times weekly, to perfect details of technique and interpretation and to correct some small flaw which, unnoticeably to us, may have developed in our dancing. These, apart from the actual performances, are our primary tasks. But there are many others.

Fittings for new costumes; fittings for others which have had to be renewed or altered. Headdresses have to be tried, make-up considered and adjusted. All artists experiment with the way they look on stage and they alter their appearance now and then to try a new approach. Many, many hours a year go into this.

There are 'photo-calls'. Few people can imagine how many of them there are. Studio photographers and those from magazines and newspapers are constantly about us. A new ballet has to be photographed; the company has to attend in full costume and make-up. A 'different' cover-photo is wanted, an 'unusual' shot of a dancer posing here and there, in London, in Paris . . . . Rome . . . . New York . . . . Leeds—everywhere. Tiring, but part of the career of any artist.

Interviews. Interviews with the press. You leave for Milan, for Brussels, and the press want to know about it. You arrive in a new town and they come and greet you with an interview,—and you return home to tell of your experiences. There is always something 'new' and the press and public want to hear about it. Interviews with agents and managers for television, for a guest appearance abroad. Luncheon meetings. A short talk to open a ballet school, an art gallery, a charity bazaar—or to adjudicate a cooking contest.

Fan mail, correspondence, shopping—the osteopath, a pedicure, a short talk over the wireless or a guest appearance—the hairdresser, a massage. And we have homes and friends and we are women too.

I enjoy reading and to visit art galleries and I like to devote a good amount of time to thinking about a coming performance. I find I am always terribly busy, and somehow busier still with every year. Now and again I am overcome with a feeling that it is all too much and far too strenuous for me. But I soon forget, for I know that there is really nothing else I would want as my life.

Editor's Note:—

If you have a problem connected with ballet, you are invited to write to Violetta Elvin, Ballet Today Readers' Service, 15 Upper Brighton Road, Surbiton, Surrey.

Editor's Note

Violetta Elvin and **John Field** are dancing in Rio de Janeiro from April 28th - May 10th. This will be the first visit of any member of the Sadler's Wells Ballet to South America.

Reader's Letter

Sir,

A NEW SPIRIT IN BALLET

Although at the present time Ballet is enjoying a hitherto unprecedented success, it is not to be expected that its present popularity will continue unless a new energy is awakened and a new vitality fostered in the veins of the Dance.

However much the Ballet going public deludes itself, the fact remains that Ballet is not accepted by the body of the public as an integral part of their lives, as a major art form. What is needed is a revolution, a bloodless one—yes—but an effective one ! We must not be afraid of progress in any of its myriad forms, to be afraid is fatal, as also is stagnation

It must not be forgotten that Ballet is a reflection of the ideas of its creators and if its creators lack ideas then the Ballet will be sterile, and in the end will betray its very self. What is needed is as it were a new spirit in the world of the Dance, a spirit which will bring about a more virile and vital Dance, a Dance in which the male has a part worthy of his capabilities and the female one where she may rise to even greater heights, a Dance worthy of the proud title of Ballet ! The new spirit in the Dance will gradually evolve a more virile Ballet, compatible with our Western ideas but at the same time retaining the new vitality and excitement.

To sum up then, a new energy is needed, a new vitality must be reactivated in the Dance, its sleep of ages must be broken and the people who now so often stifle it with their over eager affection must be made to face the fact that for too long has the Dance rested upon the triumphs of former ages, once more it must awaken and reflect the feelings and changing moods of the people in whom lie its true roots.

Edward R. Aurant-Pasteric.

The American Scene

Ballet Russe Reopens

by

GEORGE JACKSON and ROD QUIRES

AFTER an intermission of almost two years, Sergei Denham is again touring his Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Despite some additions and subtractions, the newly reorganized company strongly resembles the former edition in both repertoire and personnel. Only in one major respect does the present troupe differ from the old; this is in the loss of the ability to re-create, even in shoddy productions, the unique style of each ballet.

MAINLY CLASSICS

During its Christmas season at the Civic Opera House, Chicago, the company danced *Coppelia* (Sergueff after Petipa); *The Nutcracker* (revised by Fedorova and Franklin) and the second act of *Swan Lake* (revised by Franklin); the final act of Glazounov's *Raymonda* (Balanchine and Danilova after Petipa); *Les Sylphides* and *Scheherezade* (Fokine); *Beau Danube, Gaité Parisienne, Capriccio Espagnol, Harold in Italy* (Massine); *Cirque de Deux* (Ruthanna Boris); *Ballet Imperial* (Balanchine); *The Mute Wife, Madronos, The Mikado* (Antonia Cobos); and several Petipa pas de deux. Except for the pas de deux, almost all of the ballets call for a large cast of dancers. Since the Balle Russe de Monte Carlo is a small company (38 dancers), performers are overworked. This may explain the troupe's many under-rehearsed and carelessly danced productions. It cannot excuse them.

GOOD SOLOISTS

In contrast to a very poor corps de ballet, most of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's soloists are excellent. Frederic Franklin is both the ballet master and first male dancer. His interpretations of a wide range of roles restore characteristic qualities to ballets which other dancers attacked with uniformly undiscerning energy. Leon Danielian, a virtuoso technician, and soloists Alan Howard, Victor Moreno, Fernando Schaffenburg, and Josef Savino could, under proper direction, be the strongest group of male dancers on the American stage. Maria Tallchief, prima ballerina, is beginning to abandon the Balanchine style which has been her speciality for the last few years. Although she has not yet fully assimilated her new roles, she remains a dancer of amazing ability. Nina Novak, from Poland, is suited to demi-character roles (Swanilda in *Coppelia*, Street Dancer in *Beau Danube*); in purely classical roles, her otherwise excellent dancing is often disfigured by those affectations which, when exaggerated, are known as "the Toumanova manner". Yvonne Chouteau and Gertrude Tyven are two dancers whose technical ability enables them to attempt almost any role in the repertoire. However, Chouteau appears to good advantage only in ingénue roles. Tyven's lack of imagination makes her a flat stage personality in every role. Among the company's ladies, the most recent arrival is Irina Borowska, formerly of the Teatro Colon, Buenos Aires. Her warm femininity and grand lyricism distinguish her in an era which nourishes the cool and neo-classical.

NEW MASSINE WORK

Serious dramatic works are needed to balance the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's repertoire of classical, comedy and symphonic ballets. Neither of this season's two premieres provided the balance. Berlioz's score and Massine's ballet of *Harold in Italy* are, of course, based on Lord Byron's poem, *Childe Harold*. In what is known as "the symphonic style" of ballet (that occasionally imaginative, often banal mixture of stylized realism and unsubtle symbolism, classical and free dance), Massine depicts Byron wandering through Italy, observing but seldom participating in the life about him. Those familiar with his *Seventh Symphony* can only conclude that Massine has become more expert in the use of music, repetitive in the creation of choreography.

COBOS' MIKADO

The librettist of an operetta usually achieves his comic effect by clothing a silly situation with clever dialogue. In transforming an operetta into a ballet, the ridiculous plot remains but all wit is banished with the words. This initial handicap faced Antonia Cobos, choreographer of *The Mikado*. However, by retaining only a minimum of Gilbert's story and employing Sullivan's music for divertissements concocted from juxtapositions and combinations of Japanese kabuki and European ballet steps, Cobos almost managed to hide the basic flaw. Her other ballets have become successful comedies several seasons after their premieres; undoubtedly *The Mikado* will also be improved.

DECOR—A TRIUMPH

The greatest success of the season, deservedly so, was enjoyed by Bernard La Motte for his decors and costumes. Ivan Boutnikoff conducted the adequate orchestra. Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo is the only dance troupe in the United States which attempts to preserve the ballets of the past. A strong artistic director could make the company worthy of this necessary function.

RUTH PAGE GOES FRENCH—AND SPANISH

PRECEDING the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's season, Chicago saw several new works by Ruth Page. For the production of the excellent young opera troupe at the Lyric Theatre, Miss Page choreographed incidental dances. For the December programme of the Chicago Ballet Guild, she created two ballets. Miss Page has been able to assimilate an unusual variety of different dance styles. She began her career in the Russian modes of Adolph Bolm; continued to Austrian modern under Harald Kreutzberg with Bentley Stone and Walter Camryn she influenced balletic Americana. Now Ruth Page has become a Parisian choreographer. *The Triumph of Chastity*, (music by Ibert, costumes and decors by Leonore Fini and Gerald Ritholz), is a delightfully ambiguous commentary on the sexual implications of the Unicorn myth. A male dancer portrays the beast which can be fed only by a virgin; Amazons hunt and revel in the craters of the Moon; French fashions suit Miss Page admirably. Unfortunately, her dancers were Chicagoans. *Spectre of Love* was choreographed to de Falla's musical setting of a ghostly comedy by Sierra, (costumes and decors by Wakhevitch and Ritholz). This ballet's provincial Spanish locale seemed a more natural home for American dancers than the moon over Paris. Charles Bockman's *Nocturne* (Debussy) and Lloyd Tygett's *The Comedians* (Kabalevsky), two older works, were also seen on the Chicago Ballet Guild programme.

Alfred Rodrigues, choreographer for the new Powell-Pressburger film "Oh, Rosalinda!", with two of the company. See paragraph on this page.

MARINA Svetlova has just finished her annual North American tour with her own concert group. Since the beginning of this year the company has fulfilled nearly fifty engagements throughout the Northeast, Midwest, and South and in Eastern Canada, ending with two orchestral appearances, with the Oklahoma City Symphony Orchestra and the Buffalo Philharmonic.

Earlier in the season **Svetlova** appeared on the Canadian television network as soloist with the symphony orchestra in Montreal. She hopes to dance in Europe in the spring and summer.

In addition to **Svetlova,** the group consists of **Jack Beaber,** leading male dancer, **Anita Velez,** Spanish dancer, and **Theodor Haig,** pianist.

ANTONIO'S triumphant season in London was reviewed in the April BALLET TODAY, but we waited until this month to give you the new portrait of him which appears on page 3. Copies of this photograph, which was specially taken for us by **Mike Davis,** are obtainable price 4/- post free (for a 10″×8″ print) through the Ballet Today photographic service.

ADLER'S WELLS and British Ballet is the subject of a series of lectures which Lord Wakehurst, Governor of Northern Ireland, gave in Scandinavia during March and April. Lord Wakehurst is a trustee of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. His lectures included one to the Danish Ballet Club in Copenhagen, and another at the University in Helsinki, the latter being illustrated by a colour film.

Lord Wakehurst's visit to Stockholm coincided with the appearance of **Beryl Grey** and **John Field** with the Royal Swedish Ballet, and his lecture on March 26th was followed by a dinner given by the Swedish-British Society, to which **Beryl Grey** and **John Field** were invited.

THE Edinburgh Festival is to be held this year from August 21st to September 10th, and senior representatives from at least 28 universities from 19 countries will take part in the opening ceremony.

The dance interest at this year's Festival will consist of the Azuma Kabuki Dancers and Musicians from Tokyo—the first time that an oriental contribution has been made to the Festival—and the Royal Danish Ballet. The Japanese group, under the direction of **Miss Tokuho Azuma** will present Noh dance-dramas, colourful ceremonies of ancient Japan typical of Kabuki, and traditional dance-plays.

The Royal Danish Ballet's repertoire will include two ballets new to this country: Ashton's *Romeo and Juliet* and **Niels Bjorn Larsen's** *Capricious Lucinda* (see page 14). The company will also present *La Sylphide, Napoli, Graduation Ball* and *The Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master,* all of which are of course well known to British ballet goers.

RENAISSANCE of Ballet in the world is dealt with in a long feature by **Marcel Lobet** in the January 1955 issue of "Revue Genérale Belge". The article has now been extracted and published in the form of a twenty-page booklet by **A. Goemaere,** 21, Rue de la Limite, Brussels. Although in French, it is well worth a little effort to read. The same author has contributed an article on Pélleas et Mélisande at the Monnaie Theatre to the latest edition of a highbrow Belgian magazine, "Théatre de Belgique." This magazine also includes a most interesting article on the development of television in Belgium, referring to several TV ballet productions.

CIRENCESTER Ballet Club gave three performances at Bingham Hall, Cirencester on April 1st and 2nd. A company of over eighty took part. Guest artists were **Birgitta Kivinicmi,** ballerina of the State Theatre, Helsinki, and **Gordon Kivinicmi.** Programme included a version of *Casse Noisette* directed by Madame **Lydia Kyasht** and a number of divertissements.

ALFRED Rodrigues, now directing the dance sequences for the new Powell-Pressburger film "Oh, Rosalinda !", ascribes his consistent good health through hours of rehearsal to "brown bread, apples and happy marriage". So says the studio's publicity handout. We hope **Julia Farron** doesn't mind being placed third to brown bread and apples.

The most spectacular sequence in the film—and incidentally one of the most lavish ever to be seen in CinemaScope—is a huge ballroom scene. Art Director is **Hein Heckroth,** and the stars are **Ludmilla Tcherina, Michale Redgrave, Anton Walbrook, Mel Ferrer** and **Dennis Price.**

A Soviet Ballet company is scheduled to visit France to take part in the dance festival at Aix-les-Bains this year.

Aisle

A COMMENTARY ON

THE Marquis de Cuevas, according to a report from Paris, was most upset at the cold reception which his new ballet, *Achille,* received at Cannes recently. So much so that he got up on to the platform and made an impassioned speech reproaching the aristocratic and select patrons of the Casino for their behaviour. The ballet has libretto by **de Cuevas,** music by **M. de la Rochefoucauld** and choreography by **George Skibine.**

OLGA Kokhlova, wife of **Picasso,** died in a Cannes clinic recently after a long illness. **Madame Kokhlova** was a soloist with the Diaghilev company.

THE Fete Des Vignerons, which is held in Vevey once every twenty-five years, had **Nina Vyroubova, Michel Renault** and **Max Bozzoni** as its soloists this year.

ROSELLA Hightower gave birth to a daughter on February 18th in Kansas City, Missouri. The baby has been christened **Dominique. Hightower's** husband is theatre designer **Jean Robier.** She rejoins the de Cuevas company this month and will appear with them in Deauville in July.

MASQUE Theatre Club have published the first issue of a journal devoted to their activities. Amongst their contributors are **Joan Tucker** and **Jack Spurgeon,** former members of the International Ballet.

Founded in 1953, the Club organises weekly classes under the direction of **Maria Balinska.** Their second public demonstration takes place this month. The Club also arranges lecture-demonstrations, talks, recitals and musical evenings. Visitors and new members are welcomed. Enquiries to **Mrs. D. J. Coleman** 3, Neate House, Lupus Street, S.W.1.

DOMINI Callaghan and **Michel de Lutry** are in Munich, as dancers and choreographers in the first German musical and dancing film to be made by Carlton Films since the war.

seat

THE BALLET MONTH

KATHERINE **Dunham** is having a highly successful season in Buenos Aires.

BALLERINA postcards. Ten of the original twelve titles in this series are still available. The new series are listed on another page.

COMMENT from a dance teacher "I am goung to *frame* **David Benn's** article and hang it in my studio for the benefit of all my *ballet mamas*". *Ed. note. This article was published in April BALLET TODAY* Entitled "Examination Fever" it deplored the fact that many children were forced into taking examinations for which they were not ready by the over-ambition of their parents.

THE Bulgarian State Song and Dance Company, now at the Winter Garden Theatre, London, for a short season, comprises 110 dancers, singers and musicians. The dancers, in their colourful national costumes, are supported by a strong choir. This is the Company's first visit to London, and follows a tour of European capitals.

ANTONIO and his Spanish Ballet opened a new season at the Saville Theatre with a world premiere of **Antonio's** choreographic version of **Manuel de Falla's** *Amor Brujo*. London will miss his dynamic personality when he finally leaves for a season in Paris.

ANTON **Dolin** is to appear as guest artist with the Sadler's Wells Ballet in June, when he will dance Satan in *Job*, a role he created in 1931.

La Rose Enchantee

THE first dance festival to be organised by Italy will be held at Genoa from 25th June to 5th August. Taking part will be The Grand Ballet of the Marquis de Cuevas, the New York City Ballet and the Japanese group Azuma Kabuki.

AT Covent Garden recently my neighbour closed his eyes and gave himself up to the music completely. He was dragged back to this world by slight rustling noises from behind. Gradually the rustling reached a crescendo. He writhed from side to side in an effort to forget it. The chocolate eater persisted. Suddenly the suffering one whirled round in his seat faced his tormentor and cried "God Almighty". The rustler froze. Method effective—but not suitable for a number of people.

SUTTON Ballet Club had an interesting evening on March 16th, when **Miss Lesley Lawrence** of the late International Ballet Company gave a resume of experiences whilst with that Company. This was followed by illustrations of class work, demonstrated by her sister.

On the 13th April **Mr. John Percival** gave a very lucid description of ballet from the critic's angle.

On the 27th April a programme of stories from ballet with illustrations, is being given by members of the Club.

KENNETH **Melville** former soloist of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, who has just completed dancing in the film *Oh ! Rosalinda* has been engaged as a principal dancer in London's Festival Ballet, and will join the Company for their tour in Spain and summer season at the Royal Festival Hall, London. Twenty-five years of age, he is one of the most promising of British male dancers. His performance at Covent Garden, when he partnered **Violetta Elvin** in *Giselle*, received universal acclaim

DANILOVA will be guest artist with Festival Ballet in Spain.

NEW York City Ballet paid a short visit to London Airport during April when they flew in by Stratocruiser from New York on their way to Nice. The Company has a four months' tour on the Continent.

A Dinner Dance was held at The Cafe de Paris recently to raise funds for the Artists Pool of Industry (details of this project were given in our April issue). **Evelyn Laye, Tommy Trinder** and other well known artists appeared in the cabaret.

MAGAZINE publishers have had a record sale this month. Many will be left wondering whether this was entirely due to the lack of newspapers. Time alone will tell.

The Rosebuds Unfold

JUNIOR SECTION

CAMILLE **de Rhynal** sends us this delightful picture from Nice. Taken from a recent performance of his new ballet it shews **Jacqueline Danesi** in the title role—The Rose, **Nicole Centa**—The Butterfly, **Gilbert Maillot**—The Gardener. The other young dancers are **Maryse Dennet, Daniele Hussard, Katy Leptzic, Carmen Albanese, Michele Berger, Daniele Saucet, Mina, Noel Gamba.**

ANNA **Lendrum's** School of Russian Classic Ballet gave an evening of ballet during March. The School was opened two years ago at the Salle Erard. At this year's performance the youngest pupil, **Marilyn Scopes,** aged six, had a prominent part in a specially devised ballet of dolls.

THE Legat School achieved considerable success at the Hastings Musical Festival, despite an epidemic of influenza which prevented them from entering more than six classes. **Louise Papillon** won the Ballet for the under-ten years. **Ann Truscott** won the silver medal for the under-fifteens, and also the Ballet. **Joy Fisher** won the gold medal and also the National Class for the over-fifteens.

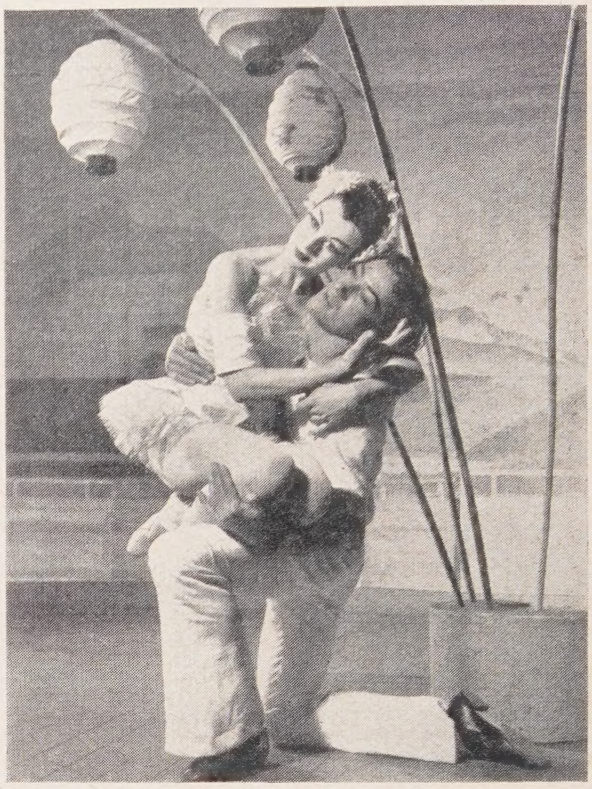
News for Junior Section Aisle Seat must reach us by the first of each month.

Many Readers write to us "We regard Ballet Today as our eyes and ears in Ballet" others "We never see Ballet at all" On this page therefore we invite you to

Come with us to the Ballet

Madame

A New Ballet in One Act



CAST

Pierre, a French sailor	Alexandre Grant
Yves, his brother	Desmond Doyle
Mme. Chrysanthème	Elaine Fifield
Mme. Renoncule, her mother	Elizabeth Kennedy
M. Très-Propre her father	Franklin White
Mr. Kangarou a marriage broker	Ray Powell
Mlle Wisteria, a courtesan	Anne Heaton
Mlle Pluie d'Avril a courtesan	Pauline Clayden
Mlle Pureté, cousins of Chrysanthème	Merle Park,
Mlle Prune, cousins of Chrysanthème	Angela Walton
A Dignitary	Leslie Edwards
Government Officials	Henry Legerton, Keith Barker
Geisha Girls	June Lesley, Dorothea Zaymes, Margaret Mercier, Doreen Wells
Mousmés, Chrysanthème's friends	Brenda Taylor, Valerie Taylor, Meriel Evans, Deidre Dixon, Cynthia Mayan, Shirley Bateman, Patricia Thorogood, Shirley Camp
Mouskos, Chrysanthème's friends	Bryan Ashbridge, Douglas Stewart, Derek Rencher, Peter Clegg, Pirmin Trecu, Gary Burne, Ronald Plaisted, Christopher Newton
Djinns	Arnott Mader, Donald Barclay, Keith Milland, John Sale, David Boswell, Peter Brownlee
Bambou, a Boatman and Rickshaw Boy	Roy Taylor
Singer	Joyce Livingstone

SCENE I. A QUAY AT NAGASAKI

Pierre and Yves, two sailors from the French warship Triomphante, land in Nagasaki. They are accosted by Djinns offering their services, amongst whom is Mr. Kangarou, who entices them with coloured postcards of various mousmes. They show a decided interest, and depart together in search of the realisation of Mr. Kangarou's pictures.

SCENE II. THE HOUSE OF INDESCRIBABLE BUTTERFLIES

Kangarou welcomes the sailors. Pierre is looking for a temporary wife. They are greeted with joy by mousmes, young maidens who seek to delight them and gain their approval. They fail to please however, and Kangarou beckons for Mlle. Wisteria and Mlle. Pluie d'Avril to display their charms, but they too do not succeed in pleasing Pierre. Suddenly Yves calls Pierre's attention to a young girl seated apart. Pierre is enchanted, and will have none other. A price is agreed with her parents, and Chrysanthème leaves ceremoniously with her family and friends to await her forthcoming marriage.

SCENE III. A GOVERNMENT OFFICE

Pierre and Chrysanthème are united before a Dignitary, Government officials and her parents, and the agreed sum of silver dollars is handed over.

SCENE IV. CHRYSANTHEME'S AND PIERRE'S HOUSE. EVENING

A procession of Chrysanthème's friends arrives at the house, and the festivities commence. After gaiety and dancing, the friends depart, leaving Pierre and Chrysanthème alone together. As night has fallen, Pierre and Chrysanthème retire.

SCENE V. CHRYSANTHEME'S HOUSE. MORNING

The Triomphante has been ordered to sail. Yves comes to take Pierre back to the ship. His own parting with his two mousmes is no less sad than that of Pierre and Chrysanthème. Failing in her attempts to make Pierre stay, Chrysanthème gives him a bouquet of her name flowers, and begs Pierre to return for a last good-bye before setting sail, and he promises. Mr. Kangarou attempts to extort more money from the sailors as they leave. Chrysanthème is left alone in her house,—counting her blessings, when Pierre returns as promised, silently so as to surprise her. Expecting to find her weeping for him, he is disillusioned when he finds her counting her money, and leaves her, forever.

Chrysanthème

Based on a Novel by Pierre Loti

Choreography - -	Frederick Ashton
Music - - - - -	Alan Rawsthorne
Scenery and Costumes	Isabel Lambert

First performance at Covent Garden
1st April 1955

Baron pictures the third new Ashton ballet.

Left: Elaine Fifield as Madame Chrysanthème in the ballet of that title, and Alexandre Grant as Pierre.

Bottom left: Solo for Elaine Fifield in which she marks the rhythm with her two fluttering fans (see Richard Austin's review on page 4).

This page - bottom left and above: Pierre and Chrysanthème are united and the festivities commence.

Bottom right: Pierre surprises Chrysanthème and leaves her forever when he discovers how she is occupied.

The Margot

A

ON a December day in 1937, Margot Fonteyn was to appear for the first time in the dual role of Odette-Odile in *Le Lac des Cygnes*. Her performance was awaited by both the public and the press, eager to ascertain whether this young dancer was now ready to dance this, the greatest of all roles in the classical ballet. They were not to be disappointed, even though there were still several technical faults which had to be mastered. The execution of the thirty two fouettés was not all that might be desired, yet there were many new facets of her dramatic capabilities which were unveiled.

In the January of the next year, an up and coming young dancer named Michael Somes made his debut in a new Ashton ballet *Horoscope*; for which Constant Lambert had written the score and Sophie Fedorovitch had designed. Fonteyn was to dance the role of 'the young woman born with the sun in Virgo', whilst Somes was to be 'the young man born with the sun in Leo'. It was this ballet which formed the start of the long and unique partnership of Fonteyn and Somes, which was in time to receive universal acclamation.

For the following season at the Sadler's Wells Theatre, the Vic-Wells ballet elected to produce *the Sleeping Princess*, a ballet which had not been performed outside the U.S.S.R., except for the ill-fated production of Diaghilev some eighteen years previous. Margot Fonteyn was to dance the role of the Princess Aurora, whilst Robert Helpmann was to be her prince. Although the production met with success and Fonteyn added further to her laurels with her performance, it was not altogether mature but it possessed many attributes. The decor and designs of Nadia Benois met with a good deal of adverse criticism. Fonteyn's performance was still the embryo of the portrayal, which was to achieve such a pinnacle of perfection some ten years later.

In the same year, the company revived *Les Sylphides* with the original Benois decor, although Fonteyn's technique had improved immeasurably, the spirit of romanticism pertaining to Fokine's ballets, still seemed to elude her characterisation. It was insufficiently sylph-like, too realistic in its conception.

1940 was a significant year, for it produced two new Ashton ballets in which Fonteyn was to play leading roles; *Dante Sonata*, with Liszt's music arranged by Constant Lambert, and *The Wise Virgins*, to Bach's music orchestrated by William Walton. Unfortunately, a few months later, on their tour of Holland, the company had to beat a hasty retreat to England due to the celerity of Hitler's Panzer divisions. In the ensuing chaos both scenery and costumes had to be abandoned. As the Young Bride in *The Wise Virgins*, Fonteyn's characterisation achieved a remarkable depth in perception; her portrayal assumed a new mantle of maturity, exuding a spirit of warmth and serenity, which one had not previously associated with her dancing. In company with Michael Somes, she created the role of one of the leaders of the Children of Light in *Dante Sonata*. Although her performance contained much individual merit, it was a ballet in which the contrasting groups of Light and Darkness took prior place to individual performances.

For the next four years the now-named Sadler's Wells ballet, were to appear at the New Theatre, where Ashton was to create the first of his wartime ballets, *The Wanderer*. Her role, with its sharp almost contortionist move ments, was completely alien to any other role which had been previously conceived for her, and needed a dancer of highly technical capabilities. It suffices to say that Ashton's trust had not been misplaced. The only other role that Fonteyn was to create that year was Love in Ninette de Valois, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, an operatic ballet in which mime played a predominant part.

1942 will be principally remembered as the year which introduced Robert Helpmann as a choreographer; a year which was notable for his "acting ballets"; for both *Comus* a masque based on the work of Milton, and *Hamlet*, a ballet in one scene to Tchaikovsky's music, were conceived. Fonteyn's portrayal of Ophelia was a memorable one;

Fonteyn Story

Part Three in this Series Will be in Our Next Issue

both in her gentleness and, as she became entangled in the snare of madness, her vain efforts to escape. Her performance realised those few words of Laertes, "O Rose of May ! Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia !—Oh heavens ! is't possible, a young maid's wits should be as mortal as an old man's life".

Yet another dramatic ballet was to follow, for in the autumn Ninette de Valois revived *The Rake's Progress*, with Fonteyn making her first appearance in the role of the Betrayed Girl, which was originally danced by Alicia Markova.

From high drama to comedy, for in the January of 1943, she was to make her first London appearance as Swanhilde in *Coppelia*. Her performance was of the usual high standard, yet it is a role which one does not associate so much with Fonteyn. Her own style of humour and comedy are not perhaps suited to the role, but the variations and the pas de deux in the last act, partnered by Alexis Rassine, were brilliantly executed.

The only new role to be created for her that year was that of Una in *The Quest*, a ballet with choreography by Ashton based on Spenser's Faerie Queene; it was another ballet which emphasised her dramatic capabilities.

Between 1944 and 1946, there were to be no new roles fashioned for Fonteyn; she did however dance with Rassine in Fokine's *Le Spectre de la Rose*; a production which was not particularly well received.

The Sadler's Wells ballet were now to return to their own theatre, but the duration of their stay was not to be a long one. On February 20th 1946 the company were chosen to give the first performance at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, since the outbreak of the war. A new production of the *Sleeping Beauty*, with designs by Oliver Messel, had been devised, with Fonteyn as the Princess Aurora.

It was to be the start of a new era in English ballet; an era which was initially marked by Fonteyn's emergence as a fully fledged ballerina.

V.C.

All the photographs in this feature are by Gordon Anthony

Opposite page. Top left: in The Quest, *1943*

Opposite page. Bottom right: Façade, *1940*

Below: in Giselle, *1946*

Danish Festival 1955

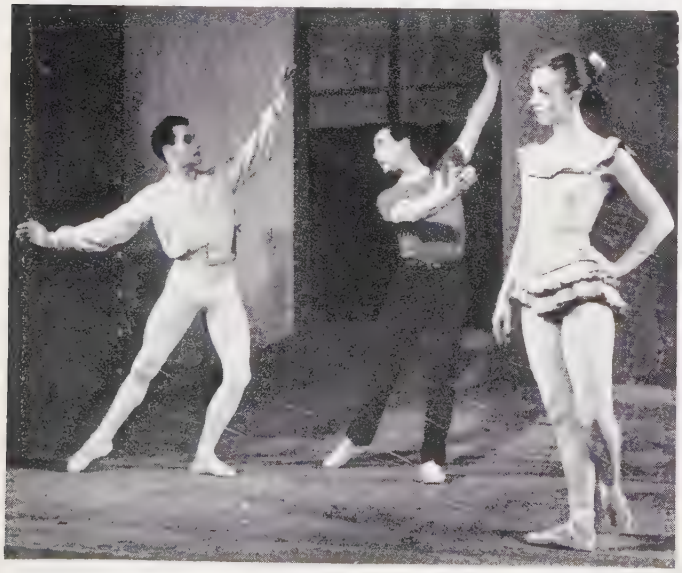
THIS Festival, which has in the last few years become one of the most important events in the ballet world, seems from advance information as though it will be well worth a visit this year. Frederick Ashton went to Copenhagen in April to produce a new *Romeo and Juliet* to Prokofiev's music. Two Balanchine ballets already well known to British ballet goers, *Night Shadow* and *Concerto Barocco*, will be mounted by John Taras for the Danish company. Two new ballets will be presented by Danish choreographers, *Behind the Curtain* with choreography by Fredbjörn Björnsson to music by Ole Schmidt, and *Capricious Lucinda* with choreography by Niels Bjørn Larsen, music by Jørgen Jersild and decor by Helge Refn.

In addition to these five new works a number of Bournonville ballets and others from the Danish Ballet's repertoire will be presented.

Readers who would like to attend this Festival should certainly take advantage of Gardiner's special 10-day tour at reduced rates. See details on Page 2.

Above: Inge Sand and Stanley Williams in Balanchine's Concerto Barocco, *which is being mounted by John Taras for the Royal Danish Ballet and will be given at this year's Festival.*

Gerald Bourke will be in Denmark for the Festival. His full report will be included in a forthcoming issue.



Two new Danish ballets. Left: Stanley Williams, Borge Ralov and Kirsten Ralov in Behind the Curtain. *Right: Inge Sand and Fredbjorn Bjornsson in* Capricious Lucinda.

Musician at the Ballet

by
Montague
Calman

Antonio— That Noble Savage

SWEEP AWAY THOSE STRINGS!

IN the concert hall there is always an air of expectancy when the conductor lifts his hands to open up with a downward beat the evening's programme. When Antonio with a characteristic blend of court elegance and primitive stealth walks onto the stage there is anticipation of drama to come.

Antonio is a one man orchestra of percussive sound and rhythmic excitement. He is a musician as well as a dancer, and from the toss of his head, the sway of his agile body, the clicking of his shapely hands, and the throbbing, pulsating harmony of his feet there is a deeply imprinted feel for music in its truest sense. A slight tap with the toe or the overwhelming passion of his heel-beat presents sound pictures as vivid as any spoken word.

A pity, therefore, that at the Palace Theatre recently, and now at the Saville Theatre, Antonio and his Spanish Ballet Company should be shouldered with a revue orchestra in the pit. The essence of the Spanish dance is its savagery. It presents the true conception of Spanish love in all its untarnished reality. And in this picture there can be no place for the tenderness of the violin string, or the soothing call of the clarinet. Why, Oh ! why, have the orchestra ? And where, Oh ! where did they find the orchestrations ?

ANTONIO'S PROGRAMME

Antonio's show opened with *Rondena* (Suite Iberia), a weary, monotonous piece badly orchestrated from the music by Isaac Albeniz. But soon the sunshine of Spain shone through the gloom with the electric throbbing gusto of a traditional *Taranto*. Here as so often in the programme the guitarists were superb: Manolo Moreno and Mariano Cordoba. Another minor mishap followed. *Almeria*, again from the Albeniz Iberian Suite, had the castenets making ones head whirl with passion, only to be brought down to earth with the thud of shocking string playing. *Viva Navarra, Gran Jota* (music by Larregia) was exceedingly humorous.

Antonio himself is always a joy to waton. He has stylised into first class entertainment dances originally conceived for the Spanish public place. Without the orchestra the show is magnificent and burning with vitality. On the stage Antonio is a noble savage and does not want the syrup of a restaurant tea orchestra to frame his fervour.

AT THE GARDEN

Music in ballet must do more than suggest the mood of the theme developed on the stage by the dancers. Vaughan Williams in *Job*, a long drawn out masque for dancing based on Blake's vision of the book, fails to convey the shades of dramatic experience indicated by the choreographer (de Valois). The music rarely brings out either the sublime theme of spirituality or the darkness of Satan's depravity. Though in Scene III, when the feasting and dancing sons and daughters of Job are destroyed by Satan there is some tremendous percussive writing. But for me the overall effect is a dreary one with little to highlight the difficult subject.

At the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Adrian Boult took over the orchestra and maintained with his exceptionally long baton a steady control over the players. But neither Vaughan Williams in his writing, nor Boult conducting could produce excitement: it is just not there.

I could not help comparing the barge-like speed of the musical monotones of *Job* with Arthur Bliss's *Checkmate* which is being given a welcome revival at Covent Garden. Recently I have seen this ballet a few times with Bliss himself conducting, and at each performance the dynamic qualities increase. Bliss not only pays particular attention to the phrasing and tonal balance of the orchestra, but appears concerned with the dancers on the stage. By so doing he manages to achieve a cohesion of music and dance, making the Royal Opera House's presentation of *Checkmate* first class ballet. I recommend this to every balletgoer.

GOOD AND VERY BAD

I only wish I could be as enthusiastic about the recent performance of *Coppelia* (Leo Delibes) when Anatole Fistoulari conducting gave a dull performance. The brass was strident, unbalanced and heavy. It was like suet pudding: I had musical indigestion. Fistoulari being a good musician soon afterwards produced a digestive mixture which wiped away the pain he had given me earlier on in the week. His version of *Rinaldo and Armida* was full of dramatic tension. I have heard its composer Malcolm Arnold give an adequate performance of his own ballet, while Robert Irving has not put a finger wrong. But I had to wait for Fistoulari to keep us alive with tingling variations of sound. This revitalisation of the score had its effect upon the dancers who were more keyed up and dramatically alive at this performance. Particularly Farron and Somes.

I also liked Fistoulari's polish for *Boutique Fantasque* (music by Rossini, orchestrated by Ottorino Respighi). The strings were excellent and the phrasing good; the brass was brilliant and clear. Fistourali, as the guest conductor at the Royal Opera House, managed to secure from the orchestra the most delicate shading and every section responded to his demands: especially the woodwinds, who were superb. But I have one reservation to make about this ballet as it is now seen. In the dance the only sounds should come from the orchestra pit. I disliked the two dancing poodles (Walton and Trecu) barking, and also the horrid noise of crinkling paper as stage money was passed around the shop.

Mayerbeer's music (arranged by Constant Lambert) for *Les Patineurs* is ideally suited for Ashton's choreography. The flowing rhythms, strings singing out and the brass quite virile, were characteristics of Fistourali's direction of the orchestra. How I enjoyed the steady though bouyant rhythms and the shapely melodic line, with every distinctive orchestral part given true emphasis by this guest conductor at Covent Garden.

TAKE IT AWAY

It was a musical idea to begin one evening's programme with a fine rendering of the Purcell overture *The Gordian Knot Untied*. Robert Irving conducting the Royal Opera Orchestra secured some noteworthy phrasing, and the timbre of the strings was warm and delicate. But this was followed by the ballet *Variations on a Theme of Purcell* which Ashton has taken from Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide*. It is quite unsuited for the dance, and the playing was both rough and ready. Before this becomes the variations on a theme of unsuitable playing let us hope Covent Garden pulls this misguided affair out of the repertoire.

Five years ago Roland Petit created a ballet for the Sadlers Wells Ballet. *Ballabile* (music by Chabrier, orchestrated by Constant Lambert) is back into the repertoire. The final scene is set to Chabrier's *Espana* but some of the scenes lack fire. Much of it is a circus-like romp with a simple skip skip theme of a revue piece. Irving secured some lively playing.

While *Facade* may not be great William Walton music it is certainly clever and entertaining. Irving sees that his orchestral players give a polished version of the score, and it is sometimes electrically charged with virile dynamics. The *Scottish Rhapsody* is skittenish; the *Yodelling* is brilliantly cross-currented music; *The Polka* is saucy; *The Waltz*, a brilliant Straussian skit; *The Tango* is full of humour, and the *Tarantella*, rompish. It was left to Bob Irving and his Boys to keep the staid Opera House Pit alive with the slick syncopation of *The Foxtrot*.

MUSIC, NO DANCE

There has been a recent move to give orchestral concerts of ballet music at the Royal Festival Hall. While it is obviously incomplete, I favour this trend as it may make the balletomane conscious of the standards for orchestral playing. The Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by del Mar at the *Homage to Diaghilev* included the music from *L'Oiseau de Feu, Le Tricorne, La Boutique Fantasque*, and, of course, *Swan Lake*. Later in the same month, the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Malcolm Sargent gave a grand and sweeping performance of the Ritual Dances from Tippett's *The Midsummer Marriage*.

I need not be told that *As You Like it* ! is not ballet. But at the Old Vic, Robert Helpmann tackles this Shakespearean piece with a deep choreographic insight and ensures that every movement and gesture forms a balletic pattern. It is superb theatre showing how much can be learned from the ballet. Gordon Jacob's music is outstandingly appropriate.

NEXT MONTH

Montague Calman will discuss Madame Chrysamthème.

Digest History of Ballet

–Part Eight–

The Last in this Series

By JAY NORMAN
Sketches by JUDAH

MODERN DANCE

ALTHOUGH Rudolf von Laban (b. 1879) was a pioneer of the "free" dance, he thought of the dance first as a matter of the movements of a body in space, and he was equally interested in time and motion study in industry and as related to human beings in general. He was very much influenced by Delsarte's pholisophy of movement and by Dalcroze's experiments in rhythmical dance compositions. After the 1914-18 war, when the 'free' dance following had enormously increased, he invented a system of dance notation and produced ballets in which he applied fundamental movement principles to emotive actions. In England, he founded the Art of Movement Studio from which, in 1950, sprang British Dance Theatre.

Mary Wigman, a pupil of Dalcroze, worked with Laban for a time from 1913 at his school in Switzerland. Wigman was, as it were, the emotional counterpart of Laban, and excelled in building up dramatic roles through which she could express her intense personality.

DRAMATIC COHESION

Another of Laban's pupils was Kurt Jooss, who also worked for a time with Sigurd Leeder. Jooss differed considerably from other 'free' dance teachers and choreographers in that he tried to incorporate many of the classical steps into his technique, which gave his ballets a dramatic cohesion and point and enabled him to build up a repertoire beyond that achieved by his contemporaries in this style. However, although he later incorporated the classical technique more fully into his work he was unable to find enough variety to extend his repertoire and his company was disbanded in 1953. His ballet *The Green Table* remained his major choreographic achievement. He helped to form at least one outstanding dancer, Hans Zullig.

Rodeo

In America, Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn united to form the Denishawn school from which sprang Martha Graham and Doris Humphrey. Humphrey based her work on theories of gravity and balance. Graham's technique is built up on body impulses and she has evolved a system of 'suspensions' and 'falls' based on the use of knees and thighs, thus incorporating the ground into movement. Her magnetic personality and austere devotion to her art drew pupils to her classes. She has an intense theatrical personality and never ceases to experiment.

EVERYDAY LIFE

Agnes de Mille, first trained in the classical technique, was influenced by Duncan, St. Denis and Graham, and throughout her early career as a recitalist and composer of dances she struggled to evolve a satisfactory synthesis between classicism and 'free' movement to express themes taken from the everyday life of the American people. Her first important ballet and her first real success was *Rodeo*, in which an original American style was first evident. She has since created a number of original works and dance sequences for Ballet Theatre and on Broadway.

One of the weaknesses of the 'free' dance is that its exponents and teachers are unable to pass their ideas to their pupils in any lasting way. It is an intensely personal mode of expression and tends to take its dramatic power, and even meaning, from its exponents at any given time or place, thus, given a less brilliant exponent, a performance can be dull, meaningless or even ludicrous. The chief difference in effect between a 'free' movement dancer, trained in control and ideas rather than steps, and a classical dancer, trained to a strict vocabulary, is that the former accentuates effort and the latter strives to conceal it and, while 'free' dance methods make possible a fairly wide range of dramatic movement, they do not allow for the nuances of expression possible in classicism.

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA

After the Russian revolution ballet, like everything else favoured by the Tsars, came under suspicion, and it was a little while before the Imperial Schools and theatres, which had immediately been put under state control, were able to settle down with some sense of continuity. In the meantime, of course, a great many of the leading dancers and teachers had left the country or had been 'removed'. Vaganova, however, remained in St. Petersburg.

In line with the latest ideology

Early attempts to purge the ballet of 'reactionary' elements were followed by a leaning towards constructivist and expressionistic themes with acrobatic choreography, in line with the expressionistic tendency of European dance in the twenties. But gradually, interest and pride in the classical ballets of the end of the previous century put the classical style back into favour and, while choreographers were encouraged to produce ballets with contemporary themes, expressing the aspirations and ideals of the Russian people, these ballets often consisted largely of divertissements, frequently in the classical manner, interspersed with mime to carry forward the action.

Thus, as it became obvious that spectacular ballets were the most popular, modern works tended to become more and more like those of the Imperial court, with elaborate, naturalistic sets, transformations, scenes of mime, and the dances introduced under any pretext to show off the virtuosity of danseur and danseuse, though the costumes were more naturalistic than formal and more extensive use was made of folk dance. Ballets created between 1927 and 1934 included *The Red Poppy* by Tikhomirov with music by Glière (1927), *The Flames of Paris* by Vajnonen with music by Assafiev (1932) and *The Fountain of Bakhtchiserai* by Zakharov, also with music by Assafiev (1934). Naturalism had, in fact, combined with a naive lack of artistry to produce what were enormous outdated spectacles, relieved only by magnificent dancing. In Lavrovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* (1940), however, a genuine attempt appears to have been made to forward the action through dancing.

SOVIET IDEOLOGY

At the same time as these modern works were being produced, the great classical ballets were undergoing periodical revisions to bring them into line with the latest Soviet ideology, but a great deal of their original grandeur remained. In the case of the Tchaikovsky ballets *Swan Lake* and *The Sleeping Beauty*, this was partly due to the amazing technique of Soviet dancers and their apparently innate muscular response to the sweep and grandeur of the music.

In becoming Soviet and isolated from the Western world, the Russian danseuse has undergone a spectacular change. The younger danseuse, perhaps exemplified by Plessitskaya, achieves her effects not by any subtle artistry, but by technical mastery and overwhelming muscular exploitation of the choreography. At her best, however, a Soviet danseuse still retains a certain aristocracy of movement, impossible to mistake. Ulanova, a superb and rare artist, lyrical dancer of mood, with a certain link with the old French school, is the exception rather than the rule.

STATE SUPPORT

A great deal of credit for the high standard of the Russian classical dancer particularly the male dancer (surely the most outstanding in the world) must be given to Vaganova, artistic director at the Maryinsky from 1930 and later director of ballet training in the Soviet Union. Among her pupils were: Semyonova, Ulanova, Loupoukina, Ermolaiev and Sergueiev. Other dancers known outside Russia are: Lepeshinskaya, Strutchkova, Shelest, Gabovich, Preobrajenski, Chaboukiani and Fermanyantz.

One of the greatest achievements of the Soviet regime in ballet is the support it gives to numerous state companies and groups throughout the Union, many of them specialising in traditional regional dances. Generally speaking, though, in its isolation from the main stream of ballet, Soviet ballet has become a backwater, its magnificent dancers performing, as it were, in a vacuum of outdated choreography, costumes and scenery.

Imaginary Conversations. Not for Serious Reading

AN AUTHORITY ON BALLET

By David Benn

IN the crush bar at Covent Garden I am frantically trying to digest the synopsis of the ballet to be presented after the interval, when in walks Mrs. Babblington-Drivelwell, with a ballerina waddle perfected over an immense period of post war years. Were it but realised that here, in our very midst, is an *authority on ballet* a respectful silence would descend. But alas, no. Mrs. Babblington-Drivell-well enters unheralded, unnoticed and unheard of. She halts in the doorway and finally, like a galleon in full sail, bears down upon me.

"My dear boy! I've heard such a lot about you from your dear Aunt Agatha, and just had to meet you when I heard you were a ballet lover". This is not the whole truth. I am indeed a ballet lover but, as our heroine is shortly to discover, I am something rather more than that —I am in fact a tactless ballet lover.

Mrs. Babblington-Drivelwell continues. "You see, I am considered by my friends to be an authority on ballet. From my earliest days I have been steeped in the Russian traditions" (*Modesty forbids our heroine to do herself justice, but allow me to assure you that when only a few months old she was found lying in her cot, her legs executing the first ten movements of the gopak*).

"But how can you be expected to appreciate the aesthetic value of the legacy which the Russians have handed down to us when you were not privileged to see Diaghilev; though I must confess that even I never actually saw him dance".

She pauses to make sure that I am duly aware of my lowly position as one who never saw Diaghilev.

"Things have never been the same since Diaghilev's untimely death. *Prince Igor* has lost that ethereal grace and charm. You have, of course, been to the Diaghilev Exhibition." I look shamefaced. "But how incredibly negligent of you. Only today I myself have been polishing my magnifying glass. I have every intention of going in the very near future." *How can I break it to her that the Exhibition has closed?*

'My dear boy! I've heard such a lot about you from your dear Aunt Agatha. . . ."

Illustrated by Toni

But still she continues. "You are of course coming to *Swan Lake* to morrow night." At the risk of shocking Mrs. B-D yet again I confess that I had thought of going to see *Café des Sports*. This brings forth withering contempt. "I never allow myself to be distracted by these new choreographers. I have seen *Swan Lake* fifteen times but would not miss a single performance of this, the greatest gift which British ballet has handed down to posterity".

At these words Petipa's ghost floats through the wall and prostrates itself before the Union Jack.

"The moral value of this ballet cannot be overestimated. It is ballets such as this which make respectable citizens of our boys and girls". With a flash of inspiration I agree that it does, indeed, instil into young minds a conception of the inevitability of the eventual triumph of good over evil—a sentence surely worthy of Mrs. Babblington-Drivelwell herself. One day with practice I too might become an authority. But our heroine is condescending. "Not entirely, dear boy. It fosters sportsmanship."

Petipa's ghost writhes in agony at my side.

"What better method of teaching a young boy that he must never shoot a sitting bird". With these words Mrs. Babblington-Drivelwell departs, having labelled me as devoid of all artistic appreciation. By my native tactlessness I have ruined for ever the reputation of my generation of ballet lovers.

An hour later as I hurry away from the theatre there fades into the distance the stentorian notes of a discourse on the aesthetic value of the thirty-two fouéttes.

There is a loud groan beside me as Petipa's ghost sinks through the pavement.

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APPROACH

WHAT exactly *is* attitude ? Nicolaeva Legat has an adventurous turn of mind, and even a question as simple as this cannot be asked without bringing in wider implications. Quite rightly so, where ballet is concerned, as we shall see.

"The word 'attitude' may mean several things' is Madame's spontaneous reply. "It may be physical; it may be moral. For instance, one could say of a person: "She stood in a graceful attitude", meaning that her pose was pleasing. It could even be said: "Her attitude was pensive", which introduces an emotional note. But a quite different, and equally correct, use of the word occurs in the sentence: "Her attitude to this proposition was antagonistic". There it denotes a moral or mental stand".

The rule of the supreme Russian school of ballet is that every position taken up should be pure and clean; there must never be any distortion. This is very largely a matter of mathematics.

The finding of balance without losing beauty of posture, Madame Legat insists, is based on purely mechanical knowledge which every teacher should know how to explain. If an instructor teaches visually only, the pupil cannot be fundamentally helped. Hence the emphasis placed on the value of all relevant education, especially geometry and mechanics.

WHEN INSPIRATION FAILS

"Even a naturally talented dancer cannot neglect mathematics as a stand-by", Madame Legat explains. "All who were intimate friends of the great Pavlova knew quite well that she occasionally had days when she was 'all over the place'. This was due to the fact that she had no mathematical grounding to help her on the rare occasions when

Attitude — Front view

TO BALLET

: No. 3. ATTITUDE A series based on interviews with N. Nicolaeva-Legat and written by Elisabeth H. C. Corathie

her great genius was in abeyance." Most dancers suffer from moods. They are not always at the top of their form. Inspiration does not spring to order; when it is lacking, the performance may become patchy. But here a technique which is mathematically sound will always come to the rescue; automatically the sub-conscious mind will supply the correcting discipline which inspiration temporarily withholds.

"Those who take dancing seriously should try to anylyse the principles of the mechanical side of dancing. Nothing could be more misleading than to imagine that all dancing is spontaneous and emotional", says Madame Legat. "Every movement in classical ballet should be controlled and disciplined—based on firm mechanical rules." If the dancer does not obey these rules, the performance is like an edifice based on insecure foundations—it may crumble at any moment. Certainly a dancer depending on spontaneous emotion may eventually evolve some kind of a technique, but this will be a deviation from pure art and will have no solid basis. The dancer who studies and understands the rules of a good school, organised and calculated from every angle of ballet, can never be left helpless as are so many who waste valuable years pursuing airy mirages that lead nowhere.

PRACTICE AT THE BARRE

Which brings us to practice at the barre. Although it may appear that ballet drill, or exercises at the bar, are for the development of the leg muscles, this is not entirely so. Bar exercises should aim at disciplining the body, promoting control of every part of it, even to the eyes. There is no limit to the possibilities of this control, therefore bar exercises should never be neglected or performed mechanically. Some teachers have a tendency to treat bar work in a very mechanical way—the routine is never varied. When this sets in it limits artistic development, providing no scope for intuitive revelation. Even the contours of the body may suffer as a result, since certain sets of muscles are used to excess and there is danger of their becoming accentuated in consequence. Exercises at the bar should be constantly changed, to keep the pupil's mind alert and the body responsive. Those who know the school routine thoroughly will not find it too difficult to change the aspect of the exercises repeatedly.

Exercises at the barre should aim not only at developing muscles and stretching ligaments but also at teaching the expression of emotion. The most successful training lies not only in the achievement of mechanical facility but also in performing a tricky combination of movements with grace, artistic elasticity and beauty of expression. They must be performed correctly, in accordance with the rules of logic, balance and design, and they must be accompanied by rhythm and musical expression. All ballet exercises should be planned subtly and scientifically, so that they further these aims, and at the same time cause the student no undue fatigue. That means the teacher must know all about it—must be able, if a question arises, to explain exactly why each exercise is done. And here vocabulary is of course important. When people use certain words, they should be sure that they all mean the same thing.

STYLE AND KIND

Attitude in the Russian System is a specific position of the body, balancing, with one leg as pivot, either on flat-foot, on half-toe or on point, while the other leg is lifted *behind* at an angle of 90 degrees with the bend of the knee in line with the corresponding shoulder-blade. The *angle* of the raised leg is important as it affects the style of the attitude, and the kind of attitude it is. By *style* is meant the beauty, the correct progression and therefore the balance and lightness of the movement; *kind* on the other hand defines the attitude; it may be "attitude complete" (full) or "demi attitude" (half-pose) or "attitude allongé". "One thing must be remembered," says Madame Legat. "In the Russian system, equal poses taken forward —*i.e.*, the leg opened and lifted forward, is *not* called an "attitude", however illogical that may seem. In our system we call these "En avant positions". There is the "quatriéme croisé en avant" or the "quatriéme effacé en avant" or "quatrieme facé en avant", just as the leg opened to the side is called "a la seconde" or "arabesque"; although the leg is opened back, it is not called *attitude* except the 'attitude allongé' which is a mixture of an arabesque and an attitude, that is to say, the arms are placed in position as for an attitude, and the leg is stretched out as in an arabesque".

Attitude — Back view

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discs

B.C. covers a lot of ground this month and makes his tailpiece Roland Petit as a gangster

books

MOST works for piano and orchestra have a popular appeal now-a-days, and here are three that are within the sphere of ballet. Saint-Saens' *Second Piano Concerto*, Columbia 33CX1217, is finely played by Gilels with Cluytens conducting, and is so eminently danceable. Schwezoff realized this and used it in his ballet, *Concerto Dansante*, created for Ballet Studio. Grieg's *Concerto*, choreographed by both Charrat and Lambrinos, has a sound workmanlike, if unexciting performance from Moura Lympany, the Philharmonia and Herbert Menges, HMV.CLP 1037. The reverse side is worth noting—the only LP of Rachmaninov's *First Piano Concerto*, which Lympany under Malko's baton, tackles with interest and good effect.

Finally, Richard Strauss' *Burleske*, which we heard when Ballet Theatre was over here as a setting for Tudor's complicated psychological ballet, *Dim Lustre*. Anthony Collins on Decca LXT 5013, brings out all there is in the score, making it appear to be a greater work than in fact it is. It certainly should have popular appeal.

From the Slavs, we have the *Marosszek Dances*, HMV.DLP 1064, of Kodaly—four attractive Transylvanian folk dances which may give a touch of variety to your collection. If not, how about Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* and *Le Baiser de la Fée*, Columbia 33CX1228. This is a delightful record and Markevitch gets Stravinsky's approach to Pergolesi and Tchaikovsky, just right. Both discs are well recorded.

Moussorgsky's music from *Sorotchinsky Fair*, Parlophone PMC 1018, is a little dull and I feel that Susskind could have made a better job of it, judging from his interpretation of *Night on the Bare Mountain*. This lack of lustre spreads to another Parlophone disc, PMC 1016, of *Alborada del Gracioso* and *Pavane pour une Infante défunte*—a pity, as Poulet's conducting of the Pavane is good. However, try Columbia's little disc, SEL 1524, of these two works. I do not think that Cluytens will disappoint you.

There must be few balletgoers who feel they can be without *Daphnis and Chloe*. Financially the best value is probably Philips ABR 4019, which gets both suites onto a 10 inch disc; although Otterloo's interpretation does not quite meet that of Ansermet's sensitive complete recording, Decca LXT 2775, or Cluyten's, Columbia 33CX1134, it is nevertheless very good and most enjoyable.

It is a loss to us that Walter Gore could not have been fitted into one of our larger companies. I was reminded of this most forcefully when I played the two issues of *Soirées Musicales*, London W91075 and Parlophone PMD 1020. What a gay and charming little ballet it was and how well he fitted it to Britten's treatment of Rossini's sparkling tunes. I prefer Parlophone's disc as Braithwaite's tempi are a little faster than Cree's and he is able to draw from the score with more success that abundance of brightness and colour which is there for the asking. Incidentally the recording is also better.

George Weldon's account of the ballet music from *The Perfect Fool*, Columbia 33SX1019, was certainly good but it does not compare with Sir Adrian Boult's recent disc, Decca LXT 5015. Not only does Boult induce a richer and more vibrant tone from his orchestra but his phrasing is far superior. With the inclusion of Butterworth's *A Shropshire Lad* and *On the Banks of Green Willow*, it is very well worth having.

There is plenty of atmosphere in Dukas' score of *La Péri*, which is finely conducted by Ansermet on Decca LXT 5003. Its first performances were at the Chatelet but it was later taken into the Paris Operas' repertoire. Ashton revived it in the very early days of the Ballet Rambert as did Staff much later on. The legend of the king searching for the Flower of Immortality which the peri or fairy guards, has many possibilities and is, therefore, worth a further revival.

Ruthanna Boris' ballet, *Quelques Fleurs* for the Ballet Russe, was choreographed to excerpts from Auber's Overtures to *The Bronze Horse*, *Fra Diavolo*, *Masaniello* and *The Crown Diamonds*. It was backed by the manufacturers of the perfume of that name and proved to be a good advertising campaign! Wolff's conducting of these, Decca LXT 5005, is satisfactory but the recording of the soft passages, has an odd dampened effect which may be disturbing.

I am including Dvorak's *Fifth Symphony "From the New World"* HMV.ALP 1222, as it may interest our friends in Canada. Maurice Morenoff choreographed it for his ballet, *La Géographie en Images* and it was most successful. He approached it with a freshness and simplicity that proved most rewarding. The vitality of Toscanini's performance is quite exceptional but he does not allow it here to overrule the charm and beauty of the slow movement. The bursts from the timpani are a bit warlike but they do not spoil a first-rate disc.

L'Aprés-midi d'un Faun has many recordings but this one by Ingelbrecht and the French Radio Orchestra, Columbia 33CX1229, is worth noting for lovers of Debussy. Included are his *Nocturnes*, with the Marcel Briclot Choir, and Ingelbrecht inspires feeling and tone-colour from his players and singers alike. I regret that I must point out what appears to be a bad tape join in the middle of the second Nocturne, *Fetes*.

Two of Decca's Medium Play are interesting and well recorded. Julius Katchen plays Liszt's *Twelfth Hungarian Rhapsody*, LW 5160, with great zest and understanding. This was in the repertoire of the Ballet Hongrois. The coupling, Balakirev's *Islamey*, is alleged to be the forerunner of his mysterious *Thamar*, that the great Karsavina made so famous. The second, LW 5163, will delight Britten and Gore fans—it is the first LP recording of *A Simple Symphony*. Eugene Goossens with the strings of the New Symphony Orchestra capture that gay and joyous atmosphere of Gore's fisherfolk.

An excellent tailpiece is *French Stars No. 1*, London W91056, of café chantant songs, as it includes Roland Petit as a gangster and Colette Marchand pretending to be daring! It is great fun to have these two gifted artists performing so well outside their usual medium.

B.C.

Ballet 4. By Serge Lido (Paris: Art et Industrie. 35s.)

THE ninety-six reproductions in this book are mainly full-page and in a photogravure that is velvety and deep. They include six in colour and are a carefully chosen selection of the work of that excellent and individual photographer, Lido of Paris. The pictures include dancers from every hemisphere who have appeared in London or Paris during the past year or so. English dancers have done well as there are a large number of pages devoted to the two Sadler's Wells companies, Festival Ballet, some Rambert dancers and Markova. There are some shots of Ulanova and other members of the Bolshoi Ballet rehearsing for that season at the Paris Opera that never took place.

There are very few of those poses taken out of doors that one has learnt to associate with Lido, and which some profess to find irrelevant. Personally, I enjoy seeing Zizi springing *en pleine air* against a natural cyclorama of sky, Charrat in arabesque and Daphne-like against a mysterious tree, or Leclercq and Magallanes, winged and fluttering, on a balcony high above Italian rooftops. Why not? There are so many of the other kind, and it makes a change. Jean-Louis Barrault writes the preface.

P.C.

Olga Spessivtzeva, by Andre Schaikevitch ("Les Lettres" Library, Paris 1955. 600 *Francs*).

ANDRE Schaikevitch has just published at the "Les Lettres" Library in Paris, a remarkable study of Olga Spessivtzeva.

This precise writer, son of the greatest choreographic critic of Imperial Russia, has the merit of writing about this genial artiste in simple language, without superfluous adjectives.

Very well documented and illustrated with fine photographs which are, unfortunately, poorly reproduced, this objective work takes an important place in Dance literature.

Well-known or celebrated persons are found on each page of this fascinating biography—Andre Levinson, Jacques Rouche, the spiritual Maecenas, director of the Opera, Serge Peretti, and Elvira Rone.

J.C.

Ballet Diary

Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden

	May	5th	*Les Sylphides* *The Firebird* *Homage to the Queen*
	„	6th	*Sylvia, (Beriosova, Chatfield)*
	„	7th	*Les Sylphides* *The Firebird* *The Three Cornered Hat*
	„	12th	*Madame Chrysanthéme* *Symphonic Variations* *The Three Conered Hat*
	„	18th	*Homage to the Queen* *Les Sylphides* *Checkmate*
	„	20th	*Le Lac Des Cygnes (Elvin, Field)*
(Mat)	„	21st	*Madame Chrysanthéme* *Les Sylphides* *Homage to the Queen*
(Eve)	„	21st	*Le Lac Des Cygnes (Jackson, Somes)*
	„	25th	*Le Lac Des Cygnes (Fonteyn, Somes)*
	„	26th	*Mam'zelle Angot* *Madame Chrysanthéme* *Tiresias*
(Mat)	„	28th	*Le Lac Des Cygnes (Beriosova, Field)*
(Eve)	„		*Le Lac Des Cygnes (Grey, Field)*
	„	31st	*Checkmate* *Firebird* *The Three Cornered Hat*

Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet at Sadler's Wells

	May	3rd	*Les Patineurs* *Blood Wedding* *Beauty and the Beast* *Les Rendezvous*
		5th	*Coppelia (Lane, Zolan, Poole)*
(Mat)		7th	*Les Sylphides* *Danses Concertantes* *Pineapple Poll*
		9th	——
		10th	*Danses Concertantes* *Selina* *The Rake's Progress*
		11th	——
		12th	——
		13th	——
(Mat)	May	14th	*Les Patineurs* *Blood Wedding* *Cafe des Sports*
(Eve)			——
		16th	——
		18th	——
		19th	——
		20th	*Les Sylphides* *Blood Wedding* *Pineapple Poll*
(Mat)	May	21st	*Coppelia*
		24th	——
		26th	*Les Patineurs* *House of Birds* *The Rake's Progress*
		27th	*The Rake's Progress*
(Mat)		28th	*Les Sylphides* *House of Birds* *Pineapple Poll*

Ed. note: owing to the Easter Holiday intervening we had to go to press early this month, please note therefore that where no production is shown against date, programme was still subject to arrangement.

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CLASS WEAR

Practice Costume for Beginners and Students

by

Jean Shakespeare

WHEN they begin learning ballet, pupils have to face problems which to the student of longer standing appear obvious. For instance, what kind of shoes to buy—many do not know the difference between pointe shoes and soft shoes—and how to keep them on.

FOR BEGINNERS ONLY

The first pair of ballet shoes you buy will have soft toes. These are made of leather, canvas or satin, leather ones being by far the most practical for class work and well worth the few shillings extra. A piece of elastic across the instep is quite sufficient to keep on a pair of soft shoes. To find where to sew the elastic, fold the heel part of the shoe inwards. Where the fold comes at each side of the shoe is the spot where the elastic or ribbon should be sewn.

When your teacher says that you are ready for pointe work, your blocked shoes will need much more preparation before they are ready for wear. Pointe shoes can be bought in leather or with leather toe caps, but these do not grip the floor properly and, particularly when you are just beginning pointe work, can cause slipping. The best procedure is to buy canvas or satin shoes and darn the toes before wearing, either with crochet cotton, or nylon and wool mixture. This serves the dual purpose of improving the shoe's grip on the floor, and lengthening the life of the shoe. It is most essential that pointe shoes should not be too large.

Pointe shoes must have ribbons, and to tie should first be crossed over the instep, then wound twice round the ankle, knotted securely and the ends tucked in. It is also advisable to sew a circle of elastic, large enough to go round the ankle, to the back of the shoe. If you slip your foot through this like an ankle strap when putting the shoe on, it will stop the back of the shoe from slipping.

If you *must* have something round the toes to "soften the blow" use animal wool. This can be bought from any chemist.

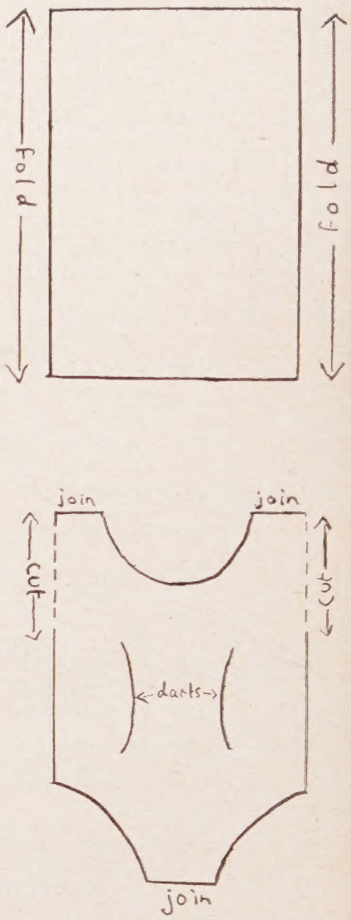
REBLOCKING SHOES

When the blocks become soft they can be reblocked very cheaply by the maker, or you can harden them yourself by pouring a little liquid shellac in the toes and leaving about three days to set. Most hardware stores sell the shellac crystals, but Brodie and Middleton of Longacre, London, W.C.2 sell shellac ready prepared in liquid form.

MAKING A LEOTARD

Leotards can be made cheaply with very little sewing. All you need is three quarters of a yard of 40″ tubular jersey material. Lay it lenghtways, and cut off the two lower corners in a curve for the leg openings. At the top, cut down about 6 inches on each side to make the arm opening. Cut a semicircle in the centre top for the neckline. Join the crutch, and the shoulder seams. Hem round the leg, neck and armholes stretching the material as you do so. Make darts to fit at waist in the front and back. The armholes can be cut out in a curve, but if they are cut straight down as shown in the diagram this will give a cap sleeve effect when worn.

Better results are obtained if the sewing is done by hand, as ordinary machine stitching does not "give" and will break as the jersey material stretches.



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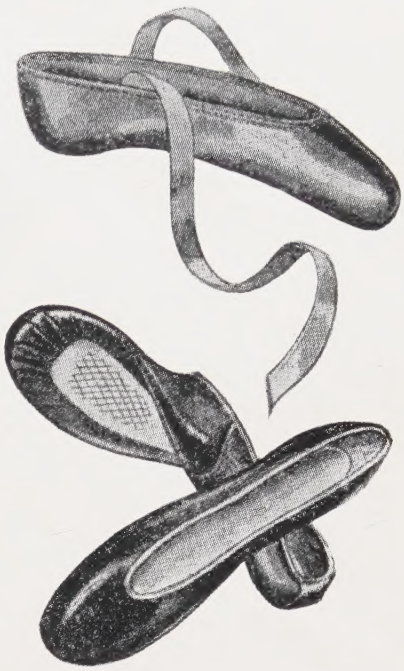

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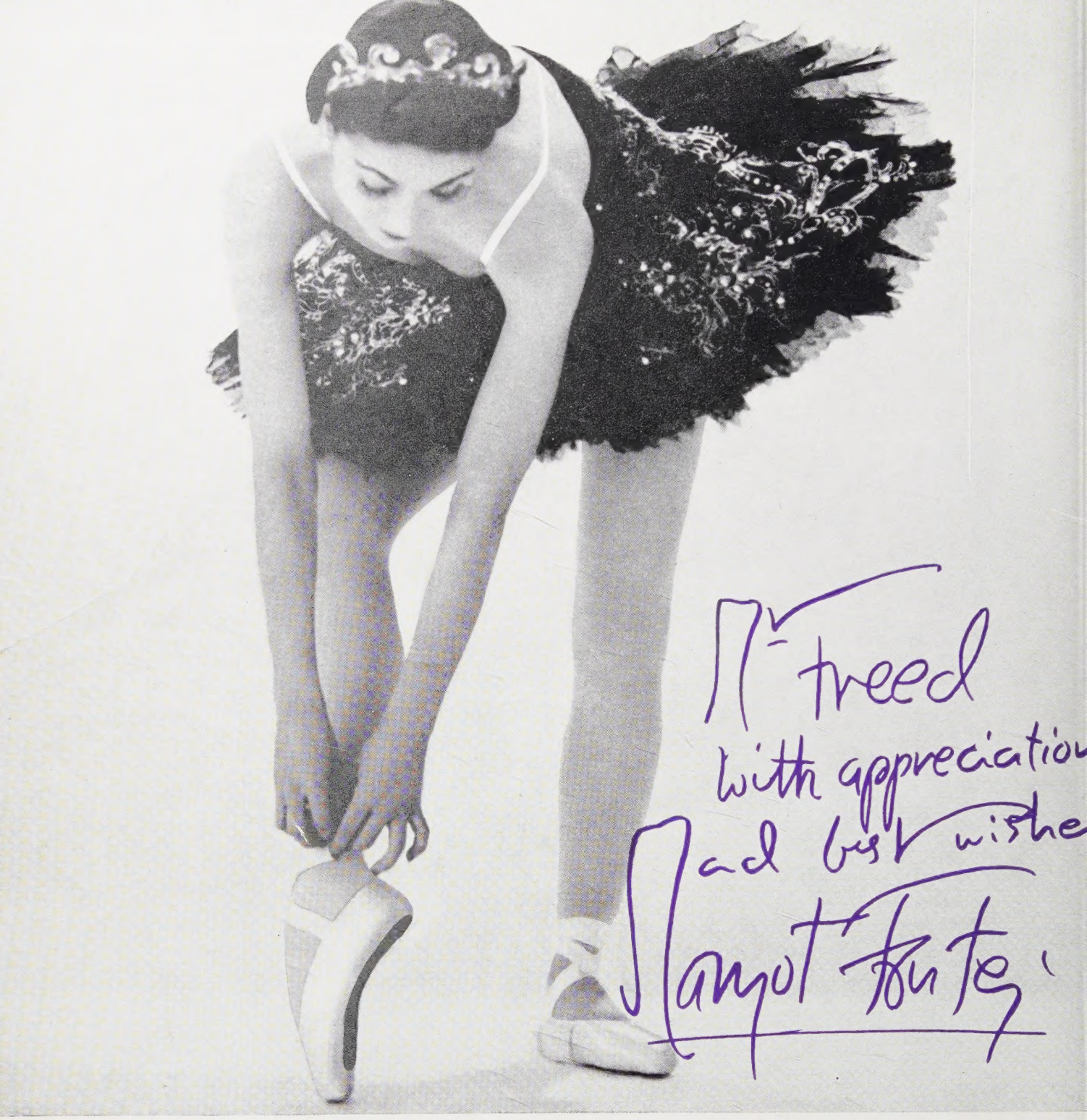

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